Electoral Reforms

*42. SHRI SUNDER LAL PATWA :
SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN :

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Election Commission has taken a stand that the person with criminal background will not be allowed to contest election and also sent some suggestions to the Government in this regard;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto and the action taken thereon;

(d) whether the Government have formed a ministerial panel to discuss proposal on electoral reforms;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the time by which this panel is likely to submit its recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) and (b) The Election Commission has taken note of certain judicial pronouncements to the effect that suspension of the sentence and release on bail does not wipe off the disqualification under section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and has directed all the Returning Officers to decide validity or otherwise of the candidature of contestants accordingly. The main suggestions made by the Election Commission for strengthening said section are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) to (f) A group of Ministers under the Chairmanship of the Home Minister has been constituted to consider the proposals on electoral reforms, including proposals for amending section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and to make its recommendations. A meeting of the Group has already been held on 5.11.97 and its recommendations are expected shortly.

Statement

The main suggestions made by the Election Commission for strengthening section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951

(i) the disqualification in all cases provided under section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 should start from the date of conviction and the period of disqualification should be the period of sentence and additional six years thereafter;

(ii) Clauses (2) and (3) of section 8 of the said Act be put together, simplified and the minimum sentence reduced from two years to six months; and

(iii) Instead of clauses (1), (2) and (3), a simple provision be made that any one sentenced to imprisonment for six months or more should be debarred from contesting elections.

TWRF Scheme

*43 SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD:
SHRIMATI BHAVNA BEN DEVRAJBHAI CHIKHALIA :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the proposal to cover State and Central PSUs Textile workers under the Textile Workers Rehabilitation Scheme has been under the consideration of the government for the last many years;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in taking a decision in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken to expedite the decision and the time by which the decision is likely to be taken to cover these workers under the Scheme?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (c) At present payments under the Textile Workers' Rehabilitation Funds Scheme (TWRFS) are restricted to workers of eligible private sector mills. However, there is a request for extending the benefit under the Scheme to the workers of a closed State Public Sector mill.

Consultations with Textile Commissioner and Ministry of Finance are required for taking a decision in the matter. Efforts will be made to take an appropriate decision early.

Recession in Industry

*44 SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :
SHRI ANNANT GANGARAM GEETE :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 5 per cent cut in Plan expenditure announced by the Government is likely to cause recession as feared by the industry;

(b) if so, the impact thereof on the domestic industry and economic growth; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to remedy the situation?